

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, JM
SUBJECT: THREE MAJOR LABOR DISPUTES SETTLED;
TEACHERS ELECT TO STRIKE

1. SUMMARY:

THE DISPUTE WHICH LED TO A ONE-WEEK STOPPAGE AT PORT BUSTAMANTE IN KINGSTON ENDED ON APRIL 15. AT THE SAME TIME, A PARTIAL SETTLEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE NATIONAL WORKERS UNION AND THE CARIBBEAN CEMENT COMPANY, AND THE PLANT RESUMED PRODUCTION ON APRIL 17, ENDING A STRIKE THAT LASTED 2 1/2 WEEKS. A STRIKE OF TRANSIT WORKERS ENDED AFTER 3 DAYS WHILE A MAJOR TEACHERS STRIKE STARTED ON APRIL 20. END SUMMARY

2. THE PORT DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CAME AFTER AN APPEAL BY MINISTER OF LABOUR, WILLIAM ISAACS, TO THE WORKERS' PATRIOTISM, POINTING TO THE GRAVE ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON THE COUNTRY WHICH THE STRIKE WAS HAVING. MR. ISAACS ALSO PROMISED TO SET UP A BOARD OF ENQUIRY TO LOOK INTO ALL ASPECTS OF SECURITY AT THE PORT. FAILURE TO ADOPT PROPER SECURITY MEASURES HAD BEEN THE CAUSE OF THE STRIKE.

3. ABOUT 300 PRODUCTION WORKERS OF THE CARIBBEAN CEMENT COMPANY VOTED TO ACCEPT J\$10 A WEEK INCREASE FOR THE FIRST
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YEAR AND \$15 IN THE SECOND YEAR OF A 2-YEAR CONTRACT. THEY REFUSED TO HAVE THE CONTRACTUAL PERIOD STRETCHED OUT TO 2 1/4 YEARS AND NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS POINT ARE CONTINUING. THIS STRIKE HAD POSED A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE ALREADY BELEAGUED CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND ABOUT 20,000 PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN LAID OFF IF THE STRIKE HAD NOT BEEN SETTLED.

4. THE STRIKE OF CITY TRANSPORT WORKERS EMPLOYED BY JAMAICA OMNIBUS SERVICE LIMITED ENDED AFTER 3 DAYS. THIS WORK STOPPAGE WAS COSTING THE COMPANY J\$60,000 PER DAY IN LOST REVENUES AND WAS ALSO TRIGGERED BY A SECURITY PROBLEM.

5. BUT AS THESE DISPUTES WERE SETTLED, ANOTHER MAJOR STRIKE STARTED. SOME 18,000 TEACHERS VOTED TO GO ON STRIKE ON APRIL 20, FOLLOWING A THIRD REJECTION OF NEW WAGE PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT BY THE JAMAICA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION. THE IMPENDING STRIKE CAUSED THE CLOSURE OF 1,200 SCHOOLS AND CRIPPLED THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD.
IRVING

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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